

Remarks

Applicants respond herein to each of the issues raised in the Office Action. Applicants appreciate the thorough examination of the present application and the indication of allowance of Claims 7-16, 19-21, 23, 26, 28-38, 46 and 47. Claim 24 is amended above to address an antecedent basis issue noted by Applicants' undersigned representative in preparing this response. Applicants submit the present application is in form for allowance for the reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-5, 24 and 39-43 stand rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 by United States Patent No. 6,160,946 to Thompson *et al.* ("Thompson"). Office Action, p. 2. Claim 22 stands rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Thompson in view of United States Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0001686 to Smith *et al.* ("Smith"). Office Action, p. 3. Applicants submit that the rejections should be withdrawn at least as Thompson does not disclose the connectorized pigtails extending from a splitter to selectively couple to connection members on a termination panel as recited in independent Claims 1 and 39.

Independent Claim 1 recites:

An interconnect cabinet for optical fibers, comprising:
an enclosure;
a splitter mounted in the enclosure that is configured to optically couple a plurality of optical fibers to a single optical fiber and having a plurality of optical fiber connectorized pigtails extending therefrom, **each of the connectorized pigtails having a first end optically coupled in the splitter to an optical fiber feeder cable to be coupled to a central office and a second end having an optical connector thereon with an optical fiber extending from the first end to the second end;**
a termination panel mounted in the enclosure and having a plurality of optical fiber connection members, ones of which are associated with respective subscriber locations; and
wherein the connectorized pigtails have **a cable length from the first end to the second end, without a connector therebetween, sufficient to allow connection to the plurality of connection members.**

Applicants submit that at least the highlighted recitations of Claim 1 are not disclosed by Thompson.

As recited in Claim 1, an interconnect cabinet includes a splitter having a plurality of connectorized pigtails extending therefrom, each having an optical connector thereon. The cabinet also includes a termination panel having optical fiber connection members. The interconnect cabinet may be used to connect subscriber locations to an optical fiber feeder cable to be coupled to a central office. More particularly, as recited in Claim 1, the fibers from the subscriber locations are associated with the optical fiber connection members mounted in the termination panel. The optical connectors on the pigtails, on the other hand, are optically coupled to the central office feeder cable by the splitter.

Such an arrangement may make interconnections between selected subscribers and the central office more convenient as described in the present specification, for example, with reference to the embodiments illustrated in Figure 1:

As illustrated in the embodiments of Figure 1, ones of the fibers from the subscriber cable 105 associated with different subscriber locations are each coupled to respective ones of the fiber connection points 120b in the patch panel front face of the termination module 130. The connectorized pigtails 150b have a cable length sufficient to allow connection of each of the pigtails 150b to the plurality of connection points 120b. As a result, service to an individual subscriber location may be readily provided or ended by coupling or decoupling one of the connectorized pigtails 150b from the one of the fiber connection points 120b associated with that subscriber. **Therefore, providing a readily determined location on the front patch panel of the termination module 130 associated with each specific subscriber may simplify the task of making a connection for a field technician who might otherwise have difficulty locating a pigtail 150b associated with a specific subscriber.**

Specification, p. 9, line 25 to p. 10, line 2 (emphasis added).

In rejecting Claim 1, it is unclear if the Office Action is relying on the splitter 351 of Thompson or the connection module 24 of Figure 14 of Thompson as disclosing the recited splitter of Claim 1. Office Action, p. 2. Furthermore, while the term pigtails does not appear in the rejection, Applicants assume the Office Action is asserting that the "individual fibers (300a) that have connectors (91) at their ends for coupling to other channels (or subscribers)" disclose the recited pigtails of Claim 1. Finally, the Office Action appears to assert that the "termination panel on the front of the splitter module (see Fig. 14)" discloses the recited termination panel of Claim 1.

Assuming the Office Action is relying on the module 24 as the splitter of Claim 1, Applicants submit the fibers 300a are not "extending therefrom" as recited in Claim 1. Instead, the connection locations 91 are fixedly mounted connectors forming part of the front panel of the module 24. Furthermore, if the module 24 is treated as the splitter of Claim 1 and the front of the module 24 is treated as the termination panel of Claim 1, there is not even any interconnect operability as the rejection would essentially treat the fiber 3001 and connecting locations 91 as connecting to themselves. Regardless of whether the splitter 351 or the module 24 of Thompson is relied on as the splitter of Claim 1, the fibers 300a are not pigtailed. Instead they are hard coupled to a panel connector. Accordingly, regardless of how the Office Action is applying Thompson, the rejections should be withdrawn for at least these reasons.

The Office Action further fails to address the distinction between central office and subscriber side connections. More particularly, as discussed in the specification excerpt above, embodiments of the present invention may allow more ready interconnection operations by a technician as subscriber locations may have a fixed location while all of the pigtailed extending from a splitter may be linked to the central office, as opposed to each pigtail being subscriber specific. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 1 should also be withdrawn for at least these additional reasons.

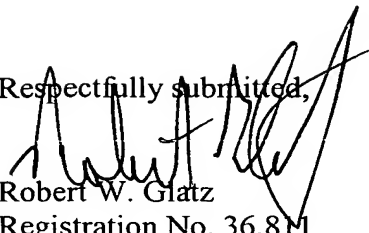
The rejections of independent Claim 39 should be withdrawn for substantially similar reasons to those discussed with reference to independent Claim 1 based on corresponding recitations therein. Furthermore, the rejections of dependent Claims 2-5, 22, 24 and 40-43 should be withdrawn at least based on the patentability of the independent claims from which they depend.

Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request allowance of the present application. If further informalities are noted, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned by telephone to expedite allowance of the present application.

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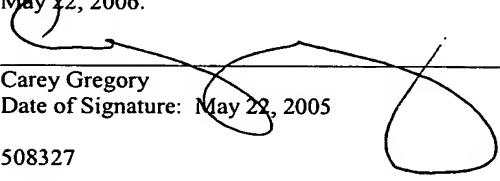
Respectfully submitted,


Robert W. Glatz
Registration No. 36,811

Myers Bigel Sibley & Sajovec, P.A.
Post Office Box 37428
Raleigh, NC 27627
Telephone (919) 854-1400
Facsimile (919) 854-1401

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